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VWBUS T4&5+

This month we have another issue packed with Transportery (and Crafter) goodness. Our first feature is Stu Radford's stunning grape yellow, T6, pop-top camper. We've been looking forward to featuring Stu's multiple award-winning bus for a while now, we think you'll agree it's been worth the wait. Our second feature is Rich Kettle's hot long wheelbase T4, an elegantly simple tin top camper. Next up is Paul Ng-A-Manns black T5. Now this is another camper; it looks like a tin-top but has a Hi-Lo stealth roof, the orange highlights really set this bus apart from the crowd. Our fourth feature is Chris Hill's T4, with almost nothing left stock, it is a homage to the 80s. Like Marmite, you'll either love it or hate it, either way it stands out like almost no other white T4 does. Bus five is Chris Tuckwell's sharp T5, in Night Blue with carbon black details. The number plate says hot, but it's cooler than cool. Our final feature is not for the faint hearted. Owned by Dean Sharp it's a bold yellow Crafter, bigger than big and yellower than yellow it's a very rare race van built by Holab Concepts. One thing is certain, you wouldn't lose it in a car park, assuming you could get it in one in the first place. We love it! Travel-wise we have two articles this month. Mike Trippitt

and his campervan 'George' visit England's North West coast and discover miles of beaches, mysterious men looking out to sea, a nineteenth century pier and a gem of a museum. Then Harriet Carpenter and Dan Ingram conclude their twelve-month epic exploration of Australia in a self-built T5. Don't think for one moment you've heard the last of them though, Harriet and Dan now run a conversion company and we're promised some further travel pieces as they continue their 'Vanlife' odyssey. Our show reports have Anne visiting Beaulieu for their VW-T Chill show, Steve attending the

first ever Custom & VDub show at Scampston Hall and Simon dropping in on the Berkeley Castle Festival of Transport, a revamp of the old Berkeley Castle VW show.



Happy Camping!

Jimmer

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This month I have mostly been...

With the show season coming to an end only Brighton Breeze and The Motorhome and Caravan show at the NEC have made it on to my calendar this month. There's more about Brighton in my column and the NEC was

much as you'd expect, big, busy and though full of big white boxes, yet again the VW Transporter and Crafter representation was up, with some interesting examples on display. Still, it'll soon be Christmas... Alan



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Buy and sell buses and parts for FREE.



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Roundup

The latest T4 and T5 news from around the world



Cruise News

Raising Funds At Christmas

There are two things that you can guarantee about VW Facebook groups and clubs, once you've put to one side Front End Friday and Side Shot Saturday, etc; one is their amazing efforts to raise money for worthy causes, the other is that they will take any excuse for a good old fashioned cruise. Christmas time gives these excellent groups ample opportunity to do both.

Here are a few for your calendar:

VDub Family

The Vee Dub Christmas Cruz held on Saturday, 14th December is described as "Taking in the lovely sights of Long Ashton, Clevedon and Portishead", all in aid of Bristol Children's Hospital and their current campaign to equip an air ambulance with specialist equipment for newborn babies and young children. Their aim is to raise more than the £740 raised last year and at least match the 250 presents donated.

Southcoast VW Transporters

The Santa Run is held on Sunday, 1st December. Their aim is "to have around 60-70 Vans in The Santa Run", joining the cruise at Beaulieu then onto Southampton Hospital to deliver Christmas Presents to the Piam Brown Ward, where the children can't come home for Christmas. Phil Ashby started it six years ago with a handful of vans and SCT have been involved for the past five years.

Van Goths Vdubz Club

A Christmas party held on Saturday, 7th December. The club is "not a normal VW club, we cater more for VW owners who are mad about all genres of music and also love spooky stuff". They also told us, "we are having our Christmas party on 7th December at Nemo's Bar in Stoney Stanton, Leicester but we aren't doing a traditional Christmas Party. Our party is fancy dress with the theme being horror and we are also doing a parade of lights with our vans, the more lights on the vans, the better". They are supporters and fund raisers for the S.O.P.H.I.E Foundation who go to schools and teach children about the negative effects of hate crime and intolerance towards others.

Oxfordshire VW Transporters

Christmas Gift Run held on Sunday, 8th December and for the fourth year they are organising a Christmas Gift Run. Meeting at Pear Tree Services to put the finishing touches to their decorations, take photos and put on their Christmas jumpers and hats, then cruising to the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, where they will park in front of the Children's Ward main entrance and start to unload presents. The children usually come down to see the vans, and gifts will be given to those who come and see them. Once unloaded, some of the members then go onto the wards, meet the children who couldn't come down and give out more presents.

To join in any of the fun search Facebook for either VDub Family or VDub Family Events, Southcoast VW Transporters, Van Goths Vdubz Club or Oxfordshire VW Transporters. For the Santa Run you can also visit www.beaulieu.co.uk and search the events page.



New Logo?

Back To Basics

Volkswagen's new logo, global identity and brand image came into effect in the UK recently. Thankfully they didn't spend millions at a PR agency, this new simplified 2D version of their iconic roundel logo was designed inhouse. Head of design, Klaus Bischoff, had a lot to say about it being subtly refreshed and being reduced to its essential elements to provide increased flexibility and suitability for digital applications. All well and good, but we can't help thinking it has a whiff of the emperor's new clothes about it.

10 NOVEMBER Slough Swapmeet

Newbury Racecourse, Berkshire
www.sloughswapmeet.co.uk

01 DECEMBER The Santa Run

Beaulieu to Southampton Hospital
Search Facebook for Southcoast VW Transporters

07 DECEMBER Van Goths Vdubz Christmas Party

Stoney Stanton
Search Facebook for Van Goths Vdubz

08 DECEMBER BeDub Santa Cruise

Lee Mill to Colebrooke Transporters
Plymouth
Search Facebook for BeDub

08 DECEMBER Oxfordshire VW Transporters Gift Run

Pear Tree Services to John Radcliffe Hospital
Search Facebook for Oxfordshire VW Transporters

14 DECEMBER VDub Family Christmas Cruz

Long Ashton to Portishead
Search Facebook for VDub Family

02 FEBRUARY Camper Mart

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28 – 30 AUGUST Camper Calling

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For full listings visit WWW.VWSHOWS.COM

Please check details/ dates with organisers before setting off!

If you know of any amendments or of a show not listed please email:
alan.hayward@vwbusmagazine.com
so that updates can be made for the next issue.



On The Go

Go Campervan

Campervan conversion specialist and campervan builder Go Campervan have just moved to an impressive new 12,000 sq ft workshop in Chesterfield. They have some exciting plans for the workshop and a new customer area in the pipeline, which we will tell you all about when they come to fruition. In the meantime you can find them at their new home, Unit 2, Centremark House, Sheepbridge Lane, Chesterfield, S41 9RX. Phone: 01246 380855 or 07890 032062 Email: info@gocampervanspecialist.co.uk The website remains the same www.gocampervanspecialist.co.uk



Machine Mart New Catalogue

Bus DIY'ers might like to know that the new Machine Mart catalogue is out now. Featuring over 760 price cuts and new products, the new 508-page Autumn/Winter catalogue is apparently "a must have for anyone seeking a huge choice of tools and equipment at unbeatable value". With over 21,000 items of tools and machinery in stores across the country and online, you should be able to find the tools you need inside. To order your catalogue go to www.machinemart.co.uk, or visit your local store.



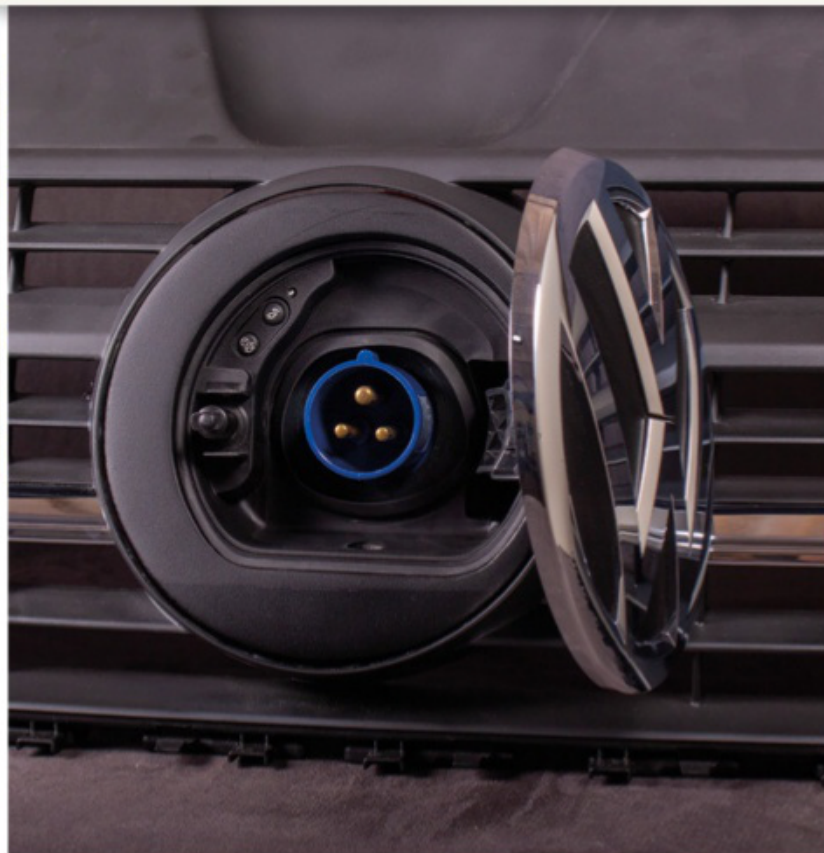
Camper Mart Is your Bus Special?

We can't believe that we are already talking about Camper Mart next year! But the tickets recently went on sale and we are now organising the buses for the inside displays. Last year we increased the number of buses on display inside and it was very well received, we also instigated a new show and shine competition held outside. You can enter both, although clearly we will only approve one of the applications. So, if you have a Transporter of any age, from a Split Screen to a T6, a Crafter or

a Caddy and you think it would look good inside (or outside) the halls at the Telford International show then let us know. The show will be held on 2nd February and if you want to buy tickets, apply for an entry to the inside displays, and or enter the show and shine visit www.campermart.co.uk and fill out the relevant short form.

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UBERBUS

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Box Clever

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This Buddy Box is available in a wide variety of colours, finishes and edge trims. This particular model comes in two sizes, the smallest of which is 400x400x400. Evo have other Buddy Boxes in their range, including one to hide your Porta Potti.

Cost: From £140

EVO DESIGNS

www.evomotiondesign.co.uk



Swamper Bling

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Cost: From £960

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Light Work

New from Sealey

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Cost: £119.94

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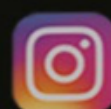
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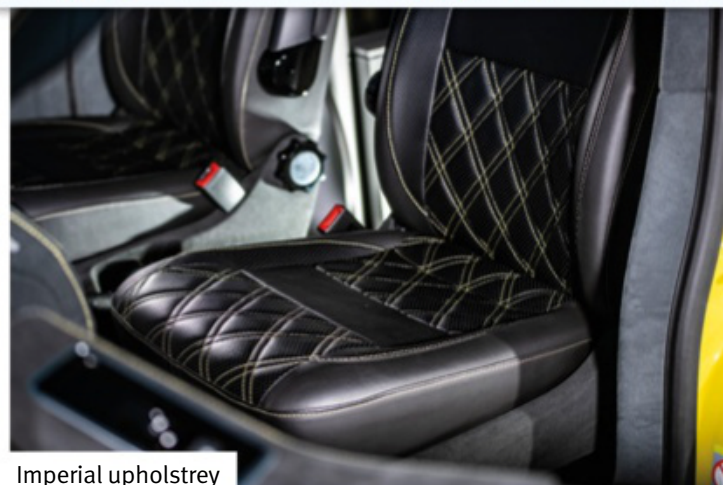
The Proverbial Thumb

No matter where this Grape yellow van goes, it never fails to attract attention. It sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb, but in a good way, obviously

📖 Steve "autoholic" Edwards 📷 Andrew Thompson







Imperial upholstery

Stu Radford is an avid scooter fan and attended many rallies on his 1970 Lambretta GP, it was tuned, ever so slightly to produce 22bhp. Not much you may think, but it was twice as much as the highest specification model that the factory produced. So more than you'd expect... While attending the events he was sleeping in a tent and as many readers will empathise, when Stu got to a certain age, he wasn't enjoying the experience as much as he used to. First, he bought a T5 that was painted in Viper Green but ended up selling it to buy a Range Rover Sport. Not long after the deal was done, he regretted it and went looking for another van.

This Grape Yellow van had just been freshly converted, it had just 25 miles on the clock and Imperial offered a great deal on the part exchange

After buying a 2011 Kombi he was still sleeping in the tent at scooter events. But, when attending a Van Jamboree event, he saw a van converted by Imperial Car Centre and decided to go and look at an orange T5 they had for sale. On closer investigation the van didn't have air conditioning or a

tailgate, both of which Stu wanted, but he spotted this Grape Yellow van that had just been freshly converted and had just 25 miles on the clock. Imperial offered such a great deal on the part exchange that it was too good to pass up. Stu's wife, Karen, had the casting vote though as to the choice of vehicle,



Unusual layout





Just for show



Insta on the mat

Although it was an inconvenience, Stu saw that he could get a silver lining out of the accident and started researching air suspension

as she would be doing most of the driving to events while Stu rode his Lambretta. She did have to give him a decent head start though.

While on route to an event, and after being forced to leave the road by an inconsiderate driver, unfortunately Karen hit a pothole and managed to bend a suspension strut. Although it was an inconvenience, Stu saw that he could get a silver lining out of the accident and started to research switching the van to an air suspension set up. As the van was to be set up with camping in mind it made the decision process that much easier, each corner needed to be able to be

adjusted individually so that the van would be level on any surface. Stuart contacted James Senior at Bag House Customs, sadly no longer trading, to install an ABP system with Air Lift's 3P controller, it comes with five pre-sets and will rise to the programmed ride height once the key has been turned. Stu had spotted the Lowdown Transporter crew at various shows and of course on Facebook, so he looked into what modifications he'd need to acquire the "lofty" status of being sticker certified. He approached suspension guru Ron Evans at Evans Autopoint, to complete the required work. He instructed them that once the job was done, they should drive



the van as low as possible at all times, as you never know when one of the LDT crew will snap you and post the picture on social media taking the mickey. This wasn't just paranoia, as was borne out when Stu and Karen were at Busfest, they raised the suspension just a touch to negotiate a slight incline and sure enough the incident was recorded for prosperity and a photo posted on groups Facebook page. You can't go anywhere it seems, so if you have joined the LDT collective then be warned, keep it low or suffer the consequences! The couple had always liked the look of the unusual L shaped layout in the back with

the sink on one side and the cooker on the other, but Stu wasn't keen on the front end, so he asked Steve Kirkby at Paintworx for a little help. Steve fitted an OEM bumper and added a Maxton splitter, both were supplied by Transporter HQ and Steve colour coded the parts to match the rest of the vehicle.

A monochrome Union Jack in vinyl has enveloped the elevating roof while the coveted LDT sticker breaks up the expanse of yellow paint on the tailgate as there isn't a rear window. While the van was with Ron Evans, he also installed a Milltek stainless steel exhaust and remapped it to 174bhp. The

Radi8 20s

Bus details

What did the van start as? Panel

Colour? VW Grape Yellow

LWB/SWB LWB

BHP? 174bhp

Wheels type and size? Radi8 2 piece split rims 20"

Tyres? F 225/35/20

R 245/35/20

Lowered? On air

Why is it special to you? Because it's mine and we love it!





Stance by Ron at Evans Autopoint

The wheels the van is wearing for the shoot are the seventh set to grace the van, Radi8 two piece 20 inch rims

wheels the van is wearing for the shoot are the seventh set to grace it. The Radi8 two-piece 20-inch rims have since been replaced by the eighth set, Rotiform three-piece split rims. However, the van won't be wearing those all year round as Stu has some banded steels to perform duty in the winter months. The new wheels had to be installed as Stu had added a 360mm disc brake conversion and sadly the Radi8's didn't have the sufficient space to accommodate the calipers, so they had to go. Nothing to do with the fact that Stu loves wheels, he's not got a problem, no, he can stop anytime.

The front and rear seats were trimmed by Imperial, but Stu disliked the standard plastic trim and so the van was dispatched to Luke at Spartan Upholstery. He covered the dash, door cards, headlining, both sun visors and

the A & B pillars in Alcantara, with some contrasting yellow stitching. By the way, the plumbing and air tanks that are located on the tailgate are just for show, although Stu takes great delight in watching people try to figure out if they are real and where the air lines go.

The Lambretta has been moved on and so Karen's driving duties are now limited, but Stu has made it up to her by finding her a very cool ride of her own, it's not a VW (what was he thinking?), but it's a 180bhp Fiat Arbat 500, so it's likely he's been forgiven. You can find the van's own Instagram account at [sk_17bus](#), if you see the van in the flesh you'll be reminded of that in the cool custom mats that Custom Vee Dubs created for it. If you happen to see it, you can't really miss it, and if it happens to have a little too much arch gap, feel free to take a photo... 📸



T6

Stu

And I'd like to thank...

James Senior at Bag House Customs for the air install
Transporter HQ for getting me to keep buying wheels
Custom Vee Dubs for the carpets
Luke at Spartan Upholstery for all the cab work
Ron Evans at Evans Autopoint for the roll bars, bushing and cutting
Steve Kirkby at Paintworx for the paint
And of course Karen for putting up with it all.

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Danny MacAskill

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Even an extreme athlete like Danny MacAskill looks forward to pleasant temperatures in his motorhome after a strenuous day of biking. A heater from Eberspächer prevents the weather from dictating his routes and ensures that he can remain mobile year round. His diesel-operated heater lets him enjoy the benefits of total independence as well. He can select where to park with full autonomy while saving gas, space and weight, because he no longer requires any additional gas bottles for heating.



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Blown Away at Beaulieu

Checking the weather prior to VW T Chill, things looked ominous. A summer gale was on the way and the event was going to be right in the middle of it

 Adam Howard



As it happened, I'd planned to visit family in New Milton on the Friday en route to VW T Chill and deciding to stay home wasn't an option, so I packed up Tonks and headed south. Tonks is SWB and not a high top, but even so being buffeted about on the A34 with big lorries being blown towards our lane was a little intimidating. Being the middle of the summer holidays, it was also very busy. We queued down to the A34/M3 interchange, crawled along the M27, and finally made it across the New Forest – looking resplendent in purple heather – to New Milton, where I squeezed Tonks into the available parking space and went to run my


family errands. By early evening I was heading towards the event and arrived at Beaulieu to be greeted by the friendly staff at the gate and the cheering sight of a number of dubs already set up on the grass

There was a lot of space to choose from to pitch up on, as it was clear quite a few had decided to give the Friday night 'camping in a gale' experience a miss! Most vans were pitched either side on to the wind, protecting their awnings or shelters, or nose/tail to wind if they had their roof up. Most 'pop-top' vans kept their tops firmly closed though! Being a solo camper, with no essential need for an awning or a raised roof, my pitching involved turning Tonks nose to wind to

minimise the buffeting, putting the kettle on and settling in for the night with supper and a good book.

No-one got much sleep...

After eventually getting to sleep at about 3am, I was woken around 6.30am by banging on the van. Half asleep I thought "what the heck?" before realising that my thermal screens were coming adrift and banging on the bodywork. After hastily struggling into some clothes I made an early morning dash to sort the screens out, which involved some strategic placing of duct tape. As I was by now wide awake, I took a walk around the site. Unfortunately, there were some shelter and awning casualties of the weather, but at least the sun was making attempts to come out, and the smell of cooking bacon and eggs was wafting on the wind. Although I did witness one person's breakfast being blown right off of their plate!

Organiser Martin and his team weren't going to be deterred by a bit of a windy day though. Oh no! They 

Despite the gale it was a very enjoyable weekend, mostly due to the excellent planning and programme organised by Martin and his team



AT THE SHOW

Friends Jacquie Murray and Jacqui Newton and dog Shadow were attending for the third time with other members of the family. Both own T5s and neither were put off by the bad weather reports: 'We just make the most of it' they said, 'it's a great social event to meet and greet at.'







At 7.30 Sunday morning there was barely any sign of people up and about. Everyone who'd been there Friday night was catching up on lost sleep!

announced that events would go ahead as planned, starting with a cruise out to the picturesque 18th Century shipbuilding village of Buckler's Hard. Despite the fact that one or two vans had had to go home due to equipment failure, there were a LOT of vans lined up for the cruise, and the high street at Buckler's Hard was well covered with Transporters – and a Crafter! I loved the chance to see Buckler's Hard, which is well worth a visit, and it was great to be able to park right in the middle of the village. I spent an enjoyable couple of hours there before heading back to Beaulieu. A big bonus of events at Beaulieu is that there is so much to do there. At my last visit I'd discovered the

house and gardens and the Abbey buildings, and I'd previously visited the National Motor Museum. While Martin's team put on games for the children in the camping field, I went to revisit the Motor Museum which was equally fascinating the second time around. I especially enjoyed the enhanced 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang 50 years' display, with elements including original film props, drawings and costumes.


The day was rounded off by having some fun with the 'pub quiz' by the fire pits! As the evening light faded the wind was as strong as ever, but it finally eased overnight. When I looked out of my van at 7.30 Sunday morning there was barely any sign of people up and about.

Everyone who'd been there Friday night was catching up on lost sleep!

Before long people were stirring, vans were being packed and cleaned, and non-campers were arriving, and by 10am the first were parking up in front of the museum entrance. FINALLY, the wind had abated enough for me to not only raise Tonks' roof, but put the thermal wrap on too – something which can be tricky in windy weather, especially when there are very nice vans parked closely on either side. The turnout was pretty impressive, with Transporters from Splitties to T6s, not to mention Crafters and Coachbuilds and there were plenty of people buzzing around them for most of the day. It was nice to see 'Chitty' out and about, too! The show was rounded off with the awarding of some very funky looking trophies, after which people began drifting away. All in all, despite the gale it was a very enjoyable weekend, mostly due to the excellent planning and programme organised by Martin and crew, not forgetting the good old determination of the attendees to have a good time regardless! 🚫

Harvesting Gold

So how do you go from buying a bit of a basket case, to turning it into a real gem of a T4 Transporter?

 Adam Howard







18" Autostar Twists

Rich Kettle had wanted a VW bus for years but finding the right one isn't always easy. Rich and his wife Karen are always open to a trip to the west country and it was while they were visiting Devon, that they really started to notice that the VW Transporter is an extremely popular mode of transport in that neck of the woods. Not only because they can be converted into a superb camper van that

allows for a reasonably priced stay in the area, but also because they have enough room inside to accommodate the equipment that a lot of hobbies require.

With their children now grown up, Rich felt that it would be the perfect time to start the search for the right van. This search eventually led to, in Rich's own words, what can only be described as a 'bit of a lemon'. You see, the search was undertaken via the not unfamiliar route of scrolling

Bus details

What did the van start as? 1997 LWB Panel Van

Colour? Red

LWB/SWB LWB

BHP? More than 68 (hopefully)

Wheels type and size? Autostar Twist 18"

Tyres? 235/45/18

Lowered? 55mm

Why is this bus special? We honestly love the peace and quiet and the freedom it gives us being away in it, we try to get away as often as possible.

through the then current listings on eBay. This was back in 2017, and it was while searching here that Rich came across what he thought could be the perfect T4. Now in and of itself this is of course, a tried and tested method for many folks to find their van of choice. But the one glaring difference perhaps is that Rich felt confident enough in his decision that he decided to hit the 'buy it now button'. Without first arranging to personally go and view the vehicle in question; thereby taking something of a chance, indeed, a high stakes gamble with this venture he was now set on.

Now Rich, it is only right and proper to mention is no fool, being an HGV instructor by trade, he fully understands the word responsibility, and the need for thinking ahead and attention to

Rich felt confident enough to hit the 'buy it now button', without first arranging to go and view the bus





If you hadn't figured it out already Rich has a definite thing for the colour red...

detail come as second nature. Which, to be fair, can clearly be seen from the photographs of his T4, where all these traits shine through in spades. It is a credit to him, and the patience of his wife Karen, that from a van with the bottom-most six inches completely rusted out, that he has gone on to build the stunner that you see here.

The van started life as a 1997 long wheelbase panel van in a metallic red colour, it came complete with the 1.9TD 68bhp engine and steel wheels shod in some 195/60/15 rubber. With the van having such a lack of lower sheet metal the first task was to cut out the rusty front and rear arches, along with the front steps and inner wings. Then have his good friend Ben Mason cut in and weld up all new metal.

The camping interior of the bus had already been put together by a previous owner, which was handy. This included the insulation and carpet lining of the walls and ceiling and the building of a solid wood framework that the seat/bed is mounted to. This has, along each side of the van, lift up top sections that allow access to the void below for storage of clothes etc. Being a long wheelbase, there is plenty of space behind the rear seat for the storage of an awning, a cool box and a portable cooking stove, plus any other camping equipment that makes life in the van comfortable. Rich and Karen opted for the portable stove, as they prefer not to cook inside the van itself, as this can spoil the carpet lining, particularly if



Red highlights in the cab too



Rich has great attention to detail and for him that means subtle mods

knocking up the all-important bacon sarnies in the morning.

Speaking of the inside of the van, there is a tidy unit run and storage cupboard that Rich has stripped back and given a lovely coat of red paint, to complement the stunning Audi Brilliant Red that the outside of the T4 has been fully and comprehensively re-sprayed in. Back inside, new LED spotlights were grafted into the roof lining and, Rich added a new

steering wheel that has red accents that again compliment the rest of the van perfectly. If you hadn't figured it out already Rich has a definite thing for the colour red...

Outside, Rich has added some Prosport springs that have given the van a nice 55mm drop, and some 18" Autostar Twist alloys that fill the arches very nicely. These are shod in 235/45/18 Aptany Sport Macro load rated tyres. I mentioned earlier that Rich

has great attention to detail and for him that means subtle mods, such as his awning rail being recessed in the nearside roof channel to hide it from immediate view, leaving the van with a clean side profile. The removal of the original aerial was a nice touch and after welding up the hole to again smooth out the bodywork lines, he had a DAB aerial that's incorporated in the front windscreen installed. Also, the removal of the rear badge, once again keeps the overall look clean and pleasing on the eye.

Under the bonnet Rich has added some colour coded boost pipes so while this hints at some more bhp lurking there, he hasn't yet taken the van to a rolling road and had it



Unusual cupboard layout





T4

professionally run up on the dyno, so it's tricky to know for sure how much is currently on tap; but it should be safe to assume that its higher than the original 68bhp from the factory. To compliment the (alleged) increase in power new HEL braided brake lines have been added all round and a PPTuning stainless steel exhaust takes care of any burnt gasses.

The thing though that Rich and Karen appreciate most about their stunning T4 is the freedom it gives them to just get away for the weekend. One of their go to favourite places to spend some time is at Ocean Pitch in Croyde Bay, North Devon. Future trips

away in the van could possibly include a longer road trip down to the south of France and one trip that both Karen and Rich quite fancied was a circumnavigation of Ireland, a stunning country and a great one to visit in a Transporter.

This van build has taken a huge amount of dedication to see it through to where it currently is. Of all the vehicles Rich has owned, some twenty-seven in all to date, the T4 is on another level, and he says he has spent more time, money and sanity on this build than all the others put together. That is why, from that original seed of an idea, Rich has truly Harvested Gold with the build of his bus. 🍷

Rich

And I'd like to thank...

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Our neighbours, Keiron and Sophie for letting me park it on their driveway

Finally my long-suffering family including, Kieran for all the spanner work.

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Berkeley Castle Festival of Transport Show

A real A-Z of vehicles in the back garden of Berkeley Castle - and guess what they had for V?

 Simon Cooke



I've been to the Berkeley Castle VW Show for the past couple of years - it's always been the last event in my very busy show diary, and it's always been a good one, despite the decidedly iffy weather that can be around by the end of September.

However, this year while planning my show diary I noticed that it had a new name - it was now called the Berkeley Castle Festival of Transport Show. As it had always been a good show, and it was being run by the same team, I stuck it down in my diary and

turned up to check it out.

There's no doubt about it - this show certainly offered the most eclectic mixture of vehicles that I've seen at any of the twenty shows I've attended this year; where else would you see a Ferrari, a 911, a Land Rover or two, a Spitfire, a Morris Minor police car and an American Pick Up Truck parked in the same field? Of course some VWs were present - albeit not in anywhere near the same amount as in previous years when it was a dedicated VW show, with a side order of classic cars thrown into the mixture - this was a shame.

So, what did it have with a VW badge on the front (even if the T5 had been de-badged, you know what I mean)? There were a couple of Bays, Splits and Beetles to keep the air-cooled people happy and several Golfs, T3s, T4s and T5s for those who like their VWs with more water on board, there was even a water cooled Beetle. And don't forget the Minis, American Cop cars, Jags, tractors, military vehicles and classic motorbikes and even a few things which I have no idea what they were - and I've been around cars, car shows and motoring magazines for a long, long time. It was certainly a right old mixture.


There were also the expected fun fair rides for the kids mixed in with a selection of traders. I suspect the poor weather (it was one of those 'danger of drowning' weather forecasts weekends) contributed to the poor turnout from vehicles and the general public alike. ☹️

There's no doubt about it - this show certainly offered the most eclectic mixture of vehicles that I've seen at any of the twenty shows I've attended this year



Pearly Queen

When Paul and Mandy Ng-A-Mann bought their first T5 about five years ago they had no idea that they were buying into a VW family

 Anne Rogers







The latest upgrade



The first van served them well for work (Paul is a carpenter by trade) recreation and camping with the kids, but by 2017 the kids were grown and Paul was thinking about a newer van. The T5 was sold, and their new van found. It was a three-year-old T5.1, an LWB shuttle which had been used to transport Thai tourists around the UK. In good basic condition, it had the 2.0 litre 140bhp engine and was well specced with

factory climate control, including rear air con, privacy glass, blinds, folding mirrors and a DAB radio. Their new arrival rolled on 17" wheels and wore Black Pearl paint. Paul's first impression was that it was an excellent base vehicle. Five years in the VW scene had given him plenty of ideas for what he wanted from a van second time around!

A major consideration was colour. The look of the outside of the van was important. The

black pearl paintwork was a great base colour – and a good reason to christen the van 'Pearly' - but it was felt that it needed some shots of a hotter accent colour and as orange is Mandy's favourite colour, it was clear that this van had to be black and orange! While Matthew Sawyer tidied up the paint, Re-Design provided the graphics. On the outside the orange touches are subtle but effective. The side stripes are complimented by the striped mirrors. The orange brake calipers look fantastic behind the smart 20" Aluwerks Spider rims. From the front you see more stripes on the de-badged grill and an orange section on the front spoiler. There's an orange VW emblem on the front number plate, and if you look closely through

Bus Details

What did the van start as? T5.1 Shuttle

Colour? Black Pearl

SWB/LWB? LWB

BHP? 140

Wheel type and size? Aluwerks Spiders 20"

Tyres? 245/40/20

Lowered? 70mm but has settled lower now

Why is it special to you? "It's our hobby and our life now. We would be lost without her."

Five years in the VW scene had given him plenty of ideas for what he wanted from a van second time around!





That 'work of art' cupboard come buddy seat



'Almost invisible' boot

As orange is Mandy's favourite colour it was clear that this van had to be black and orange!

the mesh on each corner of the Pro Street front bumper/spoiler you'll see more orange VW logos hidden behind there too! It's all about the detail! To get that smart nose closer to the road the van was lowered on Van Slam coilovers. It was dropped by 70mm originally, but I'm told it's settled a bit lower than that now.

At the back, the subtle look has been maintained, with a nice shot of orange 'pop' in the now black VW badge, and smart rear lights. Looking at the bus from the back, you'd never know it had a pop top, thanks to the HiLo Sport roof which has been fitted by Revampavan. (I've got to say that although I'm very happy with my SCA roof, the HiLo roof is something else when the scenic canvas (ahem - orange!) is pulled back for maximum views.) Revampavan also fitted the leisure

battery, spotlights, and a Webasto heater to enable comfortable use of the van all year round.

Meanwhile, Paul's carpentry skills were put to use building the brilliant 'boot' section behind the rear seats. When this is closed, any tools for work - or camping gear for trips away - are completely hidden and the dark carpeting means that the boot itself is almost invisible from the outside through the rear window. When the rear seats are folded down, they match the height of the boot, making a huge full width bed. The storage elements in this van are one of my favourite things about it - they're brilliantly thought out and absolutely ingenious. As well as the boot, Paul has built a storage unit which looks rather like the 'buddy seats' you see in many vans, often hiding the loo. Sitting behind the passenger's twin seat, the unit has a super comfortable padded



20" Aluworks Spiders



top matching the upholstery and providing extra seating. But when you lift the lid, the box has been built to hold things like the TV, crockery, cutlery and food all in fitted compartments. It's a work of art! And it still maintains the orange colour splashes. It can also be removed from the van completely, making for lots of versatile load space.

Paul's other hand-built element is the kitchen pod containing the fridge – with orange front of course! – usual hob and sink setup and a table. The neat decals are set off nicely by built in LED lighting, and there's more of the latter around the inside of the roof. The decals inside and out include

a sparkle so that they have extra 'ping' in the sunshine. In the cab section, there are extra details such as the orange lock pins, and more of that gorgeous Alcantara/leather upholstery with orange stripes, stitching and VW logos, all done by Vdub Trimshop. Eagle eyed readers may notice that the detail pic of the steering wheel isn't of the same wheel as the one in the 'wider' shots... That's because the new steering wheel arrived on the same day as the shoot but after it had been completed! (I took a couple of extra shots at a show later in the year) I think most will agree the new one is lush. It didn't arrive with orange accents, but those clearly

had to be added before it was fitted to the van, and the brushed gear change paddles look fantastic and are not just there for the look of the thing – ALL the buttons/paddles on the new wheel work. This isn't a case of style over substance.

It's not really surprising that Paul says the reason Pearly is special to them is because she has been personalised to their exact tastes and needs and that they love seeing people's reactions to seeing their van. He and Mandy are away frequently, recently visiting Scotland and Belgium and are planning a longer European tour.

As I mentioned right at the head of this feature, like quite a few of us, when we buy our buses, Paul and





When you lift the lid the box has been built to hold things like the TV, crockery, cutlery and food all in fitted compartments. It's a work of art!

Mandy had no idea of the existence or scale of the VW 'family'. Buying their first T5, and then Pearly, truly changed their lives. While Paul says that this van represents 'the most they've ever spent' he also says they love being able to modify their van just as they like, they also love to be out and about meeting people through shows, events and festivals as well as doing their own thing. Their experiences have been all good and they say they would be lost without their van as their weekends are so full of events now!

As well as all their planned events, they love to just 'shoot off at the drop of a hat' and get away, even if that is the simple

pleasure of just parking up at the beach. They refer to the van as their lifestyle now, as well as their hobby. When pushed about what the best thing was they've done to their bus, Paul picked the heater but really he says it's all about EVERYTHING! And when I asked about future plans, there's still quite a list: New front lights, new wheels – "Love wheels!" says Paul – new rear bumper with twin exhaust. Custom carpets are coming soon – they may already have arrived by the time this goes to print. I'm told there's a revamp coming soon too! I think this is a beautiful bus exactly as it is already, so I wait with fascination to find out what comes next. 🛑



Paul

And I'd like to thank:

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Exploring not Touring

Our time in Australia was coming to a close and selling our van was now at the forefront of our mind



Harriet Carpenter



Dan Ingram

We had less than a week until we were due at the airport for a full day's journey back home, but we were determined to make the most of it and see a couple of last spots in the Sydney area.

Most of our final week was spent exploring with our friend Hayden, an Australian vanlifer and photographer. We chilled in the vans, visited plenty of local café's and completed a few hikes just outside the city. One of our more eventful outings occurred on the way back from a beachside cliff walk just south of Sydney. We had just got back to the vans when it started to rain, which quickly turned to the biggest hail I've seen to this day. One of the bigger hail stones we picked up was easily the size of a small apple! The sound of the stones hitting our roof deck was horrendous, but luckily for us this wasn't too much of an

issue; apart from the windscreen, our van wasn't at all smashable!

Hayden's van on the other hand was a different story, for he had hundreds of dollars-worth of very breakable solar panels on his roof. We drove as quickly as we could to find shelter, waiting out the storm under a tree. It didn't last long, as tropical storms usually don't, and soon we were free to head back to the city. The solar panels were thankfully unscathed.

Another of our little trips entailed heading to hopefully find some glow worms at Helensburgh, in an old disused railway tunnel. It wasn't a marked spot; I had just found out about it by sheer luck, when a comment came up as a match for my 'glow worms' search in the Wiki Camps app. This meant that it probably wouldn't be busy, but also that our chances of seeing anything was slight, especially since we could only find a couple of people



Packing = A lot of mess



Back in Karijini



Choppy tidal pool on our last night



Tunnel Jumpin'



Walking into a long dark tunnel with no discernible end felt pretty wrong

who had been lucky enough to spot them. Nevertheless, we headed to the tunnel knowing that even if it were worm-less we could likely get a couple of cool photos along the way.

We knew from the comments online that the tunnel may be muddy, but it was much worse than we'd imagined. It was also absolutely pitch black. The floor was uneven, with water filled dips here and there, and thick mud in between. We stumbled around for ten minutes or so in almost absolute darkness, before our imaginations got the better of us and we headed back out to the light. We weren't in a particularly dodgy part of the country, but even so, walking into a long dark tunnel with no discernible end felt pretty wrong. Maybe those who had gone deep enough to see the worms were in a big group, and therefore felt more

secure than we did as just a two, (we had left Hayden in the city to get some editing done). We also didn't want to use our phone torches because this causes the worms to stop shining, which would've made the whole search pointless.

We had a quick play with the camera before leaving the tunnel, then we headed back to Sydney. We now had only one night left in the van before we were supposed to be leaving Oz. But there was one last spot that we just had to visit before the mayhem that was to unfold the next day. This was an oddly square and smooth cliff face, named Wedding Cake Rock. We had seen photos of it already, but in person it was something else. The rock seemed even more spectacular because either side of it was perfectly normal cliff face, making the cake part stick out 📌



Sydney Sunset

It was time to pack all of our belongings into massively overweight suitcases

like a sore thumb. We returned from the rock sluggishly, hoping that time might slow slightly and give us a little more room to take it all in before the morning came.

Too soon we awoke, both trying to savour the final sunrise in our home whilst also stressing about the day to come. It was time to pack all of our belongings into massively overweight suitcases and give the van a last clean ready to sell. We'd

had it advertised as for sale for a while, and a dive instructor from Queensland was coming to New South Wales to view (and hopefully buy) the van today, on the same morning that we were booked to fly home. Coincidentally this was also the day that our visas would run out! This meant that we had no choice but to take the flights, whether the van sold or not. Our potential buyer had already paid to have a



Our home looking cleaner than it had for months



Our last sunset in Oz



One of many cliff walks with Hayden



Last night in the van



Our most recent conversion



Inspired by a year in Oz

It was after breakfast on the last day that the diver bought the campervan which had become our first home

local mechanic come and look at our engine, we were hoping that this already-spent money meant he was pretty set on his purchase.

It was after breakfast that the diver bought the campervan which had become our first home. We were intensely sad to see it go, but this sadness was matched with gratitude. We had only \$36 dollars left to our names, probably not enough to pay for a taxi to the airport, before he bought our home on wheels. We had absolutely been banking on getting it sold before we left, and maybe stupidly hadn't made any plans for where to keep it if we didn't get it gone. Wish fulfilment might be real after all.

Heading to the airport I was a jumble of emotions, but one of the overbearing feelings was pride.

We had managed a full year on our own, without any major incidents and without running out of money. We had travelled most of the West, South and East Coasts, more than a lot of Aussie's visit in a lifetime. We would be leaving Australia with minds full of business ideas and personal aspirations, and with our hearts belonging to an incredible new community of nomads. I was also shallowly looking forward to twenty-three hours of mostly uninterrupted tv time on the plane. My plan to avoid jetlag was not to sleep, but to revel in the couch potato side of my nature and watch as many films as I could.

One weight, that of fending for ourselves in a foreign country, had been lifted, but another was on the horizon. We both knew that



Heading in to the glow worm tunnel

Wish fulfilment might be real after all

it was now that we had to decide what we were to do with our lives. We both knew it would be vanlife orientated, it was too ingrained in us now. There was no way we were going to go home, go to uni or get a dead-end job to pay for a house that we didn't want. We knew there was an alternative, along with hundreds of people

already making this alternative lifestyle work. We wanted to live flexibly, with the end goal being vanlife for the foreseeable future.

Those were all difficulties for future Harriet, current Harriet's mind was still lingering on white beaches in our van. Leaving Oz was hard, and as we got settled onto the plane, we planned a trip to explore



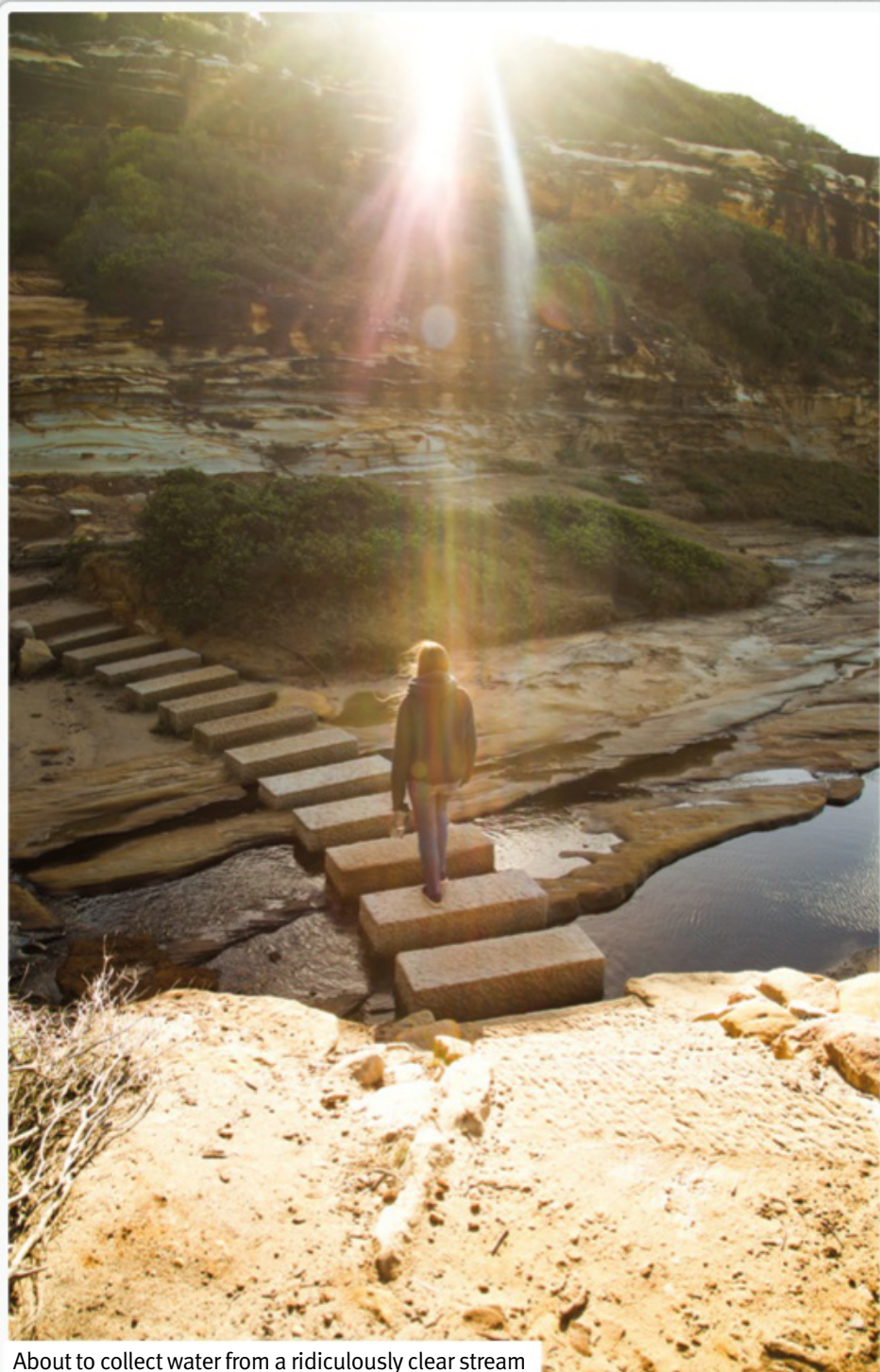
Cliffs in NSW



Wedding Cake Rock



Thinking back to the white sands in WA



About to collect water from a ridiculously clear stream

We would be leaving Australia with minds full of business ideas and personal aspirations

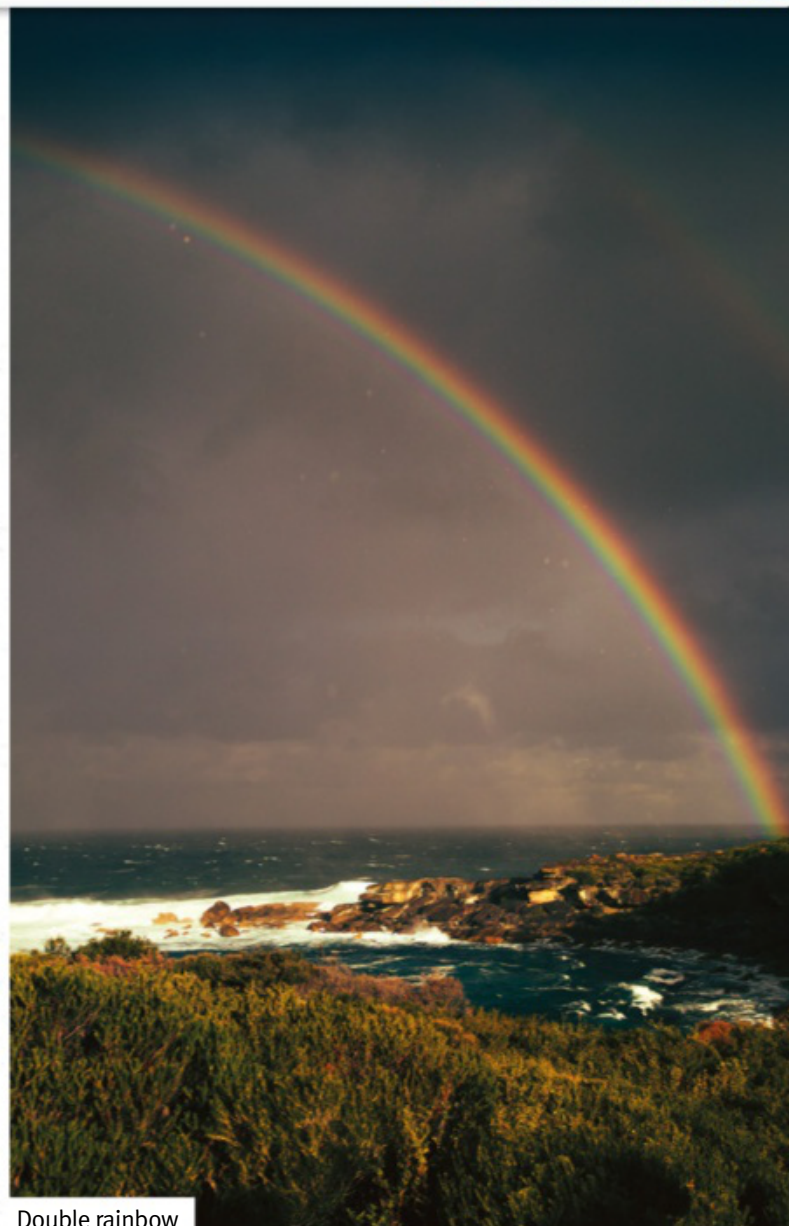
the Northern Territory, as well as the red centre of the country. We vowed to make sure to come back within the next few years, when our lives were setup in England.

Mixed in with all that was also a lot of excitement; we were of course looking forward to seeing our family and friends for the first time in a long while. Thoughts of green hills, the smell of rain and home had been woven through my mind for weeks now, and it was suddenly all within touching distance. Just a day away.

The emotion and excitement were soon overtaken by the practicalities of getting to the other side of the world. An eleven hour flight, followed by a four hour layover, then another long flight (this time eight hours long) takes a lot out of you. We were tired and ready for bed when we got home, even having consumed plenty of British

chocolate during the car journey. After a lot of sleep (although, I wasn't jetlagged in the sense that my hours were mixed up, which proves my staying up theory works well) Dan and I thought up CarpenterIngram Designs. A campervan conversion company that is the basis of what we do today. Our year away changed who we are, and also set us up perfectly with a passion that we could translate into a way to make a living. Now we build custom, one of a kind, bespoke campervans for people all over the country, and we couldn't be more stoked with how things have turned out! Plans for another Oz trip are still on hold, but we'll be sure to get there again in the next few years. 🇦🇺

If you want to know more about Harriet and Dan's trip and see some more of their outstanding images follow @carpenteringram on Instagram



Double rainbow



WWBUS

A bright yellow Volkswagen Transporter van is shown from a side profile, parked outdoors under a cloudy sky. The side door is open, revealing a black interior with a large window and a black floor mat. The van has a black roof rack and a black interior. The text "© sk 17bus" is visible on the side door. The van is parked on a gravel surface.

PeepShow

Whether it's a show winner or daily driver, share your bus with us and why you love it.



T5 **T4**

Two Timer

Here are my two girls, Becky and Livvy. Livvy (T5) has been with me for four years now, as my new works van, giving me time to pamper Becky (T4) in her retirement. At just over 200,000 miles Becky mainly has days at shows, holidays and weekends away. As a 2.4d she's not a lover of hills, but she always pulls through. She did her first show stopover this year at Camper Calling (brilliant). Conversion wise I didn't want to go down the rock & roll bed route, as I don't need to carry passengers. So, after months of drawings and sitting in the van with cardboard box mock-ups we came to this layout. She's family now and well loved.

Kev Hayes



Inside Becky

Tap-End-When?

I've been meaning to drop you a line for the peep show page for a while now, so that I can share my camper with you. Since buying my first T5 two years ago, I've driven all over the country gathering parts for the facelift. I then spent hours outside on the drive and this is the result! The whole conversion, minus the pop-top has been carried out by myself and my very patient fiancée! I have one question left, where does it end? **Jamie Tappeneden**



T5





Ideal Bus

After lots of searching I found my ideal bus, an LWB with a long nose, a tailgate and a partial conversion, plus low mileage. First on the list of 'to dos' was to lower it slightly. However, that was four years ago, and times change, the interior was ripped out and started again, more basic, but much more usable. New lows were needed, so it's had a chassis notch, cut bump stops and 5" Faulkner's. It still needs some fine fettling, but it's nearly there. Oh, by the way, an engine raise is next on the list. This one is going to be with me for a lot longer yet, it's used all year round.

Chris Clarke

T4



#Flamingovan

#flamingovan is a first generation 1990 2.4 T4, one of the earliest T4s on the road, previously she was paprika red, boring! Time for a makeover... I paint wall murals as part of my business, Two Kissing Fish, so I'm not one to shy away from a big project. After a few days of prep work, I set to rolling on an aqua base layer. Taking inspiration from a pair of flamingo shoes, I began covering her in leaves, flamingos and hibiscus flowers and Ta-dah! #flamingovan was brought to life... I then set to working on the interior. Having a full width rock & roll bed, I knew I couldn't have off the shelf units. I found some suitcases in a charity shop and turned them into cupboards for crockery, tea and coffee etc, the unit was found in a skip and upcycled with a lick of paint and some spare worktop. She is totally unique, one of a kind and it was all completed on a budget under £500.

(Look out for a feature on #flamingovan soon – Alan)

Sammy At Two Kissing Fish

T4



Show

GET YOUR BUS FEATURED

Yours

Send a brief description about your Bus (130 words max) and three high-res pictures to: alan.hayward@vwbusmagazine.com with the subject 'Reader's Rides'.

Frankie Says...

This van divides opinions and puts people into 'Two Tribes', but whether you like it or not, just 'Relax' and enjoy a trip back to the 80's

Steve "autoholic" Edwards







Another 80's icon, Recaros

Chris Hill ended up leaving his first VW, a black 92 Mk1 Golf in Spain, he'd gone over with a bunch of his belongings to start a life there working behind a bar, unfortunately he had to return quickly for family reasons and never returned for his stuff or his car. He's since had other models from the marque, including a couple of Golf GTIs and a VR6. He was first introduced to the wonderful world of T4s while he was taking

his eldest son, Faine, to the go kart track. Faine was doing well and had his own kart, it was stored in the back of a motorhome when not racing, but when he moved up a class the larger racer wouldn't physically fit in the space and so it was trailered. Chris wasn't keen to have such a big setup and so moved the motorhome on and started looking for a van, of course he wanted it to be a VW.

He wasn't keen on a T5, although his best mate Eddie had

Chris had seen a few vans on the net and had visited a couple that were nearby, he wasn't sufficiently impressed to buy any of them

Bus Details

What did the van start as?

Caravelle

Colour? VW White

SWB/LWB? SWB

BHP? 78

Wheel type and size? Audi alloys 18"

Tyres?

235/40/18

Lowered? No

Why is it special to you? It's a true one off and it's helped my relationship with Karen blossom, it gives us so much.

recently had one converted by Simon Lee Conversions, he started looking at T4s instead. Chris had seen various examples on the net and had visited a couple that were nearby but wasn't sufficiently impressed to buy any of them. Then Simon came up with a suggestion that not would not only require a fair budget, but a lot of trust too. He knew of a 2002, long wheelbase T4, twin slider Caravelle, that would make the perfect base. The only downside was that the van in question was a shell that had been stripped of every part that might have had value, this included everything right down to the engine and gearbox. The van had seen service as a shuttle bus working out of Leeds Bradford Airport, and while the 2.4 litre engine would have been regularly serviced, but without that engine in place, a replacement had to be sourced. As well as all the other parts that were missing,





First, they laid down some red lino, as who doesn't like the red-carpet treatment?

including both the sliding doors. Simon convinced Chris that the van would be right for him and so the project went ahead. He was proved right, as the final product ticked all the boxes and with an elevating roof and a rock and roll bed added, there was enough room for Faine, his brother, Grayson and Chris too.

With best mate Eddie acting as the mechanic, to make sure the kart performed perfectly, all was going well until Faine suffered an accident on the track. Chris couldn't stand to watch anymore, so he pulled the plug, on that project. To be fair Faine wasn't upset about it. The van was only used for camping excursions until the water pump failed, it was put to one side until the repair could be affected. A couple of weeks turned into months which expanded into years, the van got pushed onto the drive outside his Mum, Pat's house, before it got shunted to a friend Mario's yard, where it sat. As time passed the

white paint started to turn moss green and the grass grew up and through the wheels, Chris began to get disillusioned and so much so that he told Mario that if anyone asked about buying it then he should go ahead and sell it to 'Kill the Pain'.

In May of 2018 Chris met Karen and that was to be the start of a lot of changes as the couple hit it off straight away, it turned out that Karen is a very outdoors kind of girl, you could say she likes to be 'Watching The Wildlife' and when Chris told her he owned a camper van, she was suitable impressed. Impressed that is, until he took her to see it and she saw the sorry state it had gotten into. She felt sorry for the van and suggested that it was about time that things were addressed. Chris agreed and was impressed that she felt that way, it reignited his passion for the van too. He's not sure anyone else could, or would have, been that interested in it. After the van had been brought back to life, 📌



The cab has been...modified

As time passed the white paint started to turn moss green and the grass grew up and through the wheels

perhaps by 'The Power of Love', the couple were out and about and Karen asked if it had a name, Chris said that it didn't and as the pair were both fans of the 80's band 'Frankie Goes To Hollywood', the name was suggested and the van was christened Frankie. Chris commissioned a large sticker from Car Styling Signs for the pop top roof, and he and Karen discussed

whether they should change the interior to something that would reflect their interest. They came up with a few ideas, one of which was to cover the base of the roof bed with album covers. By chance Chris spotted a genuine 1985 tour poster from the band that fitted the space better and so they thought about putting the covers on the floor instead. Having laid them



Unique flooring

out, they decided that it didn't really give the look they were after so in a flash of inspiration they removed the records from the sleeves and laid them down instead. The next problem was how to protect the vinyl and after seeing a video on YouTube of a guy covering his floor with two pence pieces and Epoxy resin, they knew what they needed to do. First, they laid down some red lino, as who doesn't like the red-carpet treatment? Then they attached Karen's teenage record collection to it. After making a bund wall to stop the resin escaping, they laid down a 3mm deep coating. That wasn't quite thick enough, so once dry they did the same again, which



Award winning interior



Having worked in the bar industry it was only a matter of time before he added some strobe lights, lasers, a smoke machine and even a full-sized glitter ball

provided the finish they wanted. To compliment that, Eddie and Chris spent a day with a big square of red carpet and cut and steamed it into place in the cab area to make sure it was a perfect fit around those 80's icons, a pair of Recaro seats. The door cards and dash received a little resin too, after Chris had found as many posters and clippings that he could about the band. After gluing them in place the finish wasn't quite how he wanted and so the resin was added. Now they gleam like 'The Only Star In Heaven'.

Having worked in the bar industry, it was only a matter of time before he added some strobe lights, lasers, a smoke machine and even a full-sized glitter ball to the interior. A TV came after that, so that when they are at events, they can leave

the van with their favourite band playing and others can reminisce and enjoy the music too.

Car Styling Signs were called on again to provide the black infill that runs the length of the van, along with all the other stickers, Chris decided he wanted to acknowledge Karen too and so the numbers that are on the side of the van are the date they first met. The van has attracted a lot of attention and was the only unanimous judge's choice at the Volkspower 2019 event, where it won Best Interior. The van will be around at various events, if you see it go and take a look as there's more going on in there that can be described in these few pages. And as in 'The Pleasuredome', there's always a welcome at this van. 🚫



Chris

And I'd like to thank:

Simon Lee Conversions
Car Styling Signs
Eddie for all his help and advice
And Karen for reigniting my interest in it.

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Another Place

Mike Trippitt and 'George' steal a few of days in the northwest, and discover miles of beaches, mysterious men looking out to sea, a nineteenth century pier and a gem of a museum   Mike Trippitt

Although a northerner, I'm unfamiliar with England's northwest coast. Until a fellow campervan owner recommended it recently, Formby Point Caravan Park, and the beauty of the beaches here had passed me by.

On arrival, expectations are exceeded. The site sits pleasingly in woodland just off Lifeboat Road. Its touring pitches give easy access to paths through sand dunes to the sea. Once my VW T6 camper George is pitched, the beach calls.

Soft, fine sand bound with coarse marine grass makes the 500-metre walk over dunes arduous at times, but it's worth the effort. The undulating landscape gives way to a sandy beach and

vast sky. Wind turbines stand out white on the horizon against a cloudless blue. For a mile or so along the shore the occasional dog walker and jogger shares the vast space. Although The Wirral and Merseyside, seven miles south are in view, the isolation is tangible. By the time George and I are reunited a rich golden sunset has eased into a deep purple twilight.

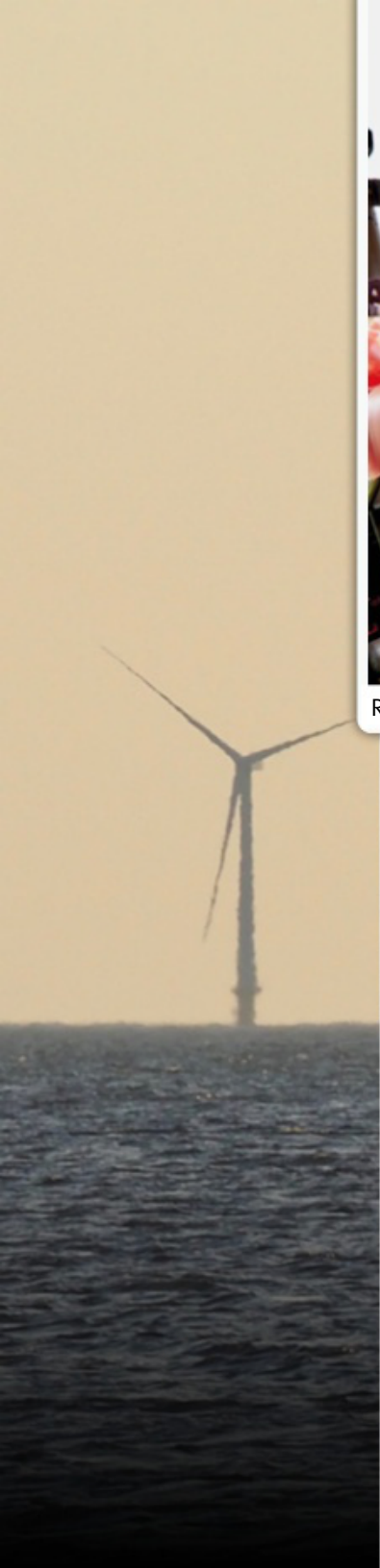
The next day, another glorious sunset graces Crosby beach, halfway between Liverpool and Formby, overlooking Bootle to the east and Wallesey over the river. Though it is classed as a 'non-swimming' beach due to the dangers of tides and soft sands, its expanse and vistas beguile thousands on summer days. Since 2005, Crosby beach has been

home to Sir Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'. 100 cast-iron life-size figures stretch along three kilometres of shore. Some are up to 1 kilometre out to sea and disappear under high tide. According to visitliverpool.com, each is 'staring at the horizon in silent expectation'. Gormley's art installation is as at home here as the Ferry 'cross the Mersey and The Liver Birds. Perhaps after fourteen years it is just as loved. For an hour I walk among the statues as the sun drops in the west. It's enjoyable, but do I understand 'Another Place'? Maybe not.

The old Lancashire county rises up in these parts from the flat lands of beaches and estuaries to a fringe of dunes and sandhills. This provides both a barrier against the sea, and a barren landscape on which development or agriculture has proved difficult over centuries. It was in these coastal undulations, especially in Scotland, that the game of golf thrived where nothing else could. The dry, sandy soil of Formby and



Fountains outside The Atkinson



Royal mower



Late evening sun over the Pier



George on Ainsdale Beach



'Another Place'



Southport is home to no less than seven golf courses and links. The most renowned, Royal Birkdale Golf Club, lies south of Southport at Birkdale Hills. Founded in 1889, Birkdale Golf Club became 'Royal' by command of King George VI in 1951. It has hosted the Open Championship ten times and the Ladies British Open Championship six times, though no British golfer has ever won those tournaments at Birkdale.

A left turn off the A565 onto Coastal Road, leads to Southport through Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills towards the golf club. It's an extraordinary landscape: windswept, severe and bare, yet imposing and breath-taking. It's also where motorists can park their vehicles on the beach. At Ainsdale George and I drive onto the firm reddish sand. There are miles of it stretching up and down the coast and towards a distant surf. The sea retreats almost to the horizon at low water, making it safe to park. It is of course controlled, and it's not free! But it's beautiful, and a great place to spend a

Known as 'The Lawn Ranger' I met Brian Radam at his 'British Lawnmower Museum'

few hours with a campervan.

Southport basks under a clear sky and warm sunshine when we arrive. The Caravan and Motorhome Club site on The Esplanade will be our halt for the night. It's a short walk to the beach, Pleasureland Amusement Park and the town. First though, I meet Brian Radam, author of the Haynes Lawnmower Manual (a practical guide to choosing, using and maintaining a lawnmower), a renowned expert on historic lawnmowers and curator of The British Lawnmower Museum. That there is a lawnmower museum is news; that it is in Southport is a surprise. Known as 'The Lawn Ranger', Brian has been involved in the lawnmower industry since the 1960s and loves all things mechanical. His enthusiasm for lawnmowers and their history is astonishingly infectious, and he tells

me how the first lawnmower came about. "It was invented by Edwin Beard-Budding in 1830. He never set out to make a lawn mower. He worked in a textile mill in Stroud. The mill owner had received an order for guardsmen's uniforms and asked Beard-Budding to make him a machine to cut the tufts and nobbles of the cloth to make it perfectly smooth. What he invented was a spinning blade over a fixed blade and he found that it cut grass very efficiently." It remains the basic design of the modern lawnmower, and there's a replica of the first at the museum, built by motorcycle racer and TV presenter Guy Martin. Two hundred restored machines of special interest are on display at the museum, though the collection runs to over one thousand. Manufacturers



Southport's Marine Lake



Gormley's statues are apparently "Staring at the horizon in silent expectation"

not normally associated with mowers built some: Royal Enfield, Rolls Royce, Hawker Sidley and Perkins Diesel. The museum also possesses many original patents and blueprints. Among the collection is one from Lord's Cricket Ground and a sit-on mower that belonged to the Prince and Princess of Wales, as well as models previously owned by the

likes of Brian May, Paul O' Grady and Nicholas Parsons. There's even Eric Morecambe's old Qualcast Electric Super Panther from the 1970s that was once included in Lancaster Life magazine's 'A history of Lancashire in Seventy Objects'. Brian knows the story well. "When it was collected by the refuse man on a sunny afternoon Eric was celebrating the birth of

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The British Lawnmower Museum



George at Formby Point campsite



The Pier at low tide



Crosby Beach



Formby Point



Antony Gormley's 'Another Place'

The 100 statues are made from 17 body-casts taken of the artist's body. They were originally displayed at Cuxhaven, Germany. Planning permission for them to remain permanently at Crosby was eventually given in 2007.

On his website the artist says: "The idea was to test time and tide, stillness and movement, and somehow engage with the daily life of the beach. This was no exercise in romantic escapism."

his first baby. He was on the lawn writing 'It's a boy' in the lawn with weed killer. I think Bart Simpson copied him a few years later!" Enthusiasts of mechanical engineering will enjoy an hour at this quirky little museum talking with Brian. I certainly did, but alas, I still have no interest in gardening. Cutting my lawn will always remain a chore.

Southport has a mix of seaside attractions: amusements, restaurants and bars, funfairs, souvenir shops, a model village and miles of sandy beach. Uniquely, its Marine Lake not only provides a waterfront away from the beach, but also accommodates a variety of waterborne activities, including rowing boats and motorboats for hire. During a walk over Marine Parade Bridge in the early evening sunlight, paddleboarders move easily across the water below. The sea is a long way over the sands from here.

"Southport Pier", claims the local council, "is the oldest iron pier in the country and the second longest too". There's no doubting it's an impressive engineering feat, but land reclamation and the marine lake, make half its

"Southport Pier", claims the local council, "is the oldest iron pier in the country"

length reach over the town, not the beach or the sea. In fact, from its start on The Promenade I stroll the length of it, around the pier head and back, without ever setting foot on it, or without getting my feet wet. That cannot be said of all piers. The pier opened in 1860 and has undergone major restoration works throughout its history. The current pier pavilion, a licensed wedding venue, opened in 2002, but sadly the pier's tramway, that had re-opened in 2005, closed in 2015 to reduce wear on the structure and maintenance costs. A journey from one end to the other and back, 2000m in all, has to be undertaken on foot.


Before dinner and a stroll back along the front to the campsite I take a look inside The Atkinson. Built in the late nineteenth century with money donated to Southport Corporation by William Atkinson, a cotton manufacturer who first holidayed in and then lived in Southport, The Atkinson was

originally a library and art gallery. It's an impressive building at the heart of the town that's now home to a library, exhibition space, museum, café, studio and theatre. Tonight, live on stage, 1980s duo 'Hue and Cry' will be performing on their 'Bitter Suite' tour. Can it really be thirty years since the Kane brothers topped the chart with their album of the same name. I wonder, as I walk back into the sunshine of the town centre, whether they are still 'Looking for Linda'.

I've enjoyed Southport in the warmth and sunshine. Those bars and restaurants that have tables outside create a café culture and give a European air to this unassuming Lancashire town. With plenty to see and do along the coast, and with twenty-two miles of outstanding beaches close by, Formby Point and Southport should not be overlooked when considering places to visit on a hot summer day. ☺

Custom & VDub 2019

When you're starting a new show certain factors need to be considered including the date and the venue, of course the one thing you can't plan for is the Great British weather

 Steve "autoholic" Edwards



Custom VDub was a new addition to the show calendar for 2019 and so it's only fair that the magazine does its best to try and support them. Sadly, the event was beset with problems from the start, none really of their own making.

Daren Harper and his partner, Rosie, had the brilliant idea of putting on a custom car, hot rod and VW event in the beautiful grounds of Scampston Hall in North Yorkshire. They were given their choice of the ninety acre site in which to place their event, the grounds were carefully designed by the famed landscape architect, Lancelot "Capability" Brown, who was given the nickname as

he would tell his clients their property had capability for improvement. He did a great job at Scampston with the careful placement of trees by planting mature ones, even moving some with his self-designed machine. He had a Lodge built in the Deer Park that had originally been intended as a folly from which to enjoy the view of the Hall. With the second hottest day ever recorded in the UK on the Thursday before the event, you would hope that things would continue that way for the weekend, but the weather, as you may recall, had other ideas. The rains arrived on the Friday, there was so much that the local power grid had been knocked out with



The show and shine field did get some attendees with members of Vag Division and Distinkt car clubs in attendance





AT THE SHOW

This is Misha the dog, she was more than happy to stay dry and warm in her owner's very stylish and stunningly decorated Airstream caravan and we don't blame her.





traffic lights being affected. The precipitation continued into Saturday, which sadly meant that the classic vehicles that had been promised did not leave their heated garages, leaving the show field looking a little bare. The event was not the only one that weekend to suffer, at Bug Jam down at Santa Pod there was no racing at all on Saturday and at Car Fest North the ground got very muddy. Unfortunately the predicted attendance just didn't materialise and so some of the food vendors, of which there were quite a few, decided to cut their losses and head home, even the funfair had switched off early. The show and shine field did get some attendees with members of Vag Division and Distinkt car clubs in attendance, one of the latter groups was washing his T5 with his own clever pressure hose device, now that's dedication. The show has the potential to appeal to everyone with everything from auto jumble, through things you never knew you needed, to festival plaits and flags. Most

They were given their choice of the ninety acre site in which to place their event, the grounds were carefully designed by the famed landscape architect, Lancelot "Capability" Brown

tastes were catered for too, with fish and chips, curry and of course Yorkshire Pudding wraps on offer from various vendors, for drinks a gin bar, a cocktail bar in a Bay window and beer from a converted fire engine were available.

The rain did let up at one point and this reporter took that opportunity to do something he'd never done before, pack up and leave an event early, apologies to the organisers, but even our dog had had enough wet weather for one weekend. Daren and Rosie deserve nothing but praise for their efforts. It was unfortunate that on the show weekend, the issues that pursued their ambitious plans seemed

relentless. Hopefully, they will be back for a second event, their venue is perfect for a show of this type. For updates you can check out the event's Facebook page or the website at www.customvdub.co.uk 🚫



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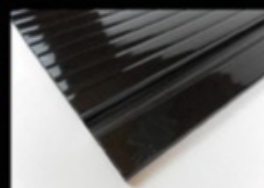
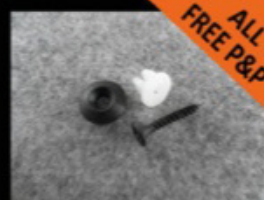
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Red Hot and Blue

When Chris Tuckwell bought his Night Blue bus, getting it converted was a bit of a mission, mostly due to two doors and a fridge

📷 Anne Rogers 📷 John Sousa







The van itself was spot on – a factory spec Kombi Highline twin slider, it was in fact the colour that hooked Chris when he saw it at his local VW Commercial dealer. Just ten months old, it had 10,000 miles on the clock and that deep rich Night blue paintwork was in immaculate condition. As he'd specifically wanted something that wasn't black, white or red, his first thought of the Kombi was "great colour!"

At the time, Chris was looking to

upgrade his 05 plate T5, which had been his entry van, bought in 2012 after coveting one for a long time. Camping is in his blood, his parents had a motorhome, which would be loaded with bikes and kayaks, plus everything including the kitchen sink when the family would set off for the mountains on holiday. Chris loved it. From his early 20s he was eyeing up T4s with camper conversions and thinking 'one day'... So, the '05 van was taken in part exchange, and the deal was done on

the Kombi. A van that was destined to become a quality conversion, using top parts and suppliers.

Apart from the twin sliders and cab carpets, the van was totally standard, rolling on 16" steels and with the 1.9 litre engine putting out 140 bhp. A perfect blank canvas for conversion. One of Chris' ideas for the van was to put in a Slidepod tailgate kitchen, but in the end, he decided it wasn't the route for him. However, in talking with Jonny at Slidepods, he discovered that they did lots of other things including roofs and electrics. So, Chris sent the van to them for phase one of the conversion and Slidepods installed an SCA 194 roof, full leisure electrics, sound deadening, lining, flooring, and the swivels for the cab seats.

The van was dropped 65mm on Bilstein B14 coil-overs and poly

Bus Details

What did the van start as? Kombi Highline

Colour? Night Blue

SWB/LWB? SWB

BHP? 204

Wheel type and size? Judd T331R 20"

Tyres? 275/40/20

Lowered? 65mm

Why is it special to you? "I feel like I've put a lot of time and effort into the very nearly finished bus that we will really enjoy being in."

As he'd specifically wanted something that wasn't black, white or red, his first thought of the Kombi was "great colour"





Upgraded lights

brushes were fitted, “to replace the creaking OEM rubbish”! The wheels were replaced by smart black 20” Judd T331Rs, clad in Nexen rubber. Well, eventually replaced by the Judd’s. There were apparently three other sets of wheels, before the ones now adorning the van, it’s possible that these may also end up being displaced in favour of a new set. (What is it with multiple sets of wheels and VW vans, and their owners?!) A Webasto Air Top diesel heater has also been installed.

Chris does a three-week trip to Europe every summer. Sometimes visiting the Austrian Alps and lakes which he says are incredible in the summer, he often stays on the west coast of France, which suits his affinity for the water and the beach.

Chris says he ‘takes a detour east when we reach The Vendee, and cut across to the Loire Valley which is stunning’. As I write, he’s just back from the latest French adventure, where this time he was forced to head for the coast and the reviving sea breezes by the 40-degree heat of the French heatwave. With an extra 64bhp since it was remapped the van can make brisk progress to its long-haul destinations.

Back at home on the South West Peninsula, Chris and his van are often to be found near the sea with Perranporth, Fistral, Crantock and Polzeath favourite locations for days out or weekend camping trips. The ability to just stop anywhere and put the kettle on, is one of the things Chris loves. And with the practicality of a van and the space, means barbeques on the beach are transformed. He enjoys the VW scene and likes the club feel. He’s a waver, and remarks “some of them even wave back”!

So, bearing in mind the fact that the van gets used A LOT, it was a bit of an unwelcome surprise to discover that getting phase two of his ideal conversion done proved to be troublesome.

There were two issues which

were problematic. The first was that Chris wanted the conversion done on the European or ‘wrong’ side. This was for the very good reason that his parking arrangements mean he has to enter and exit the van on the driver’s side. After countless calls to conversion companies, it seemed none of them were interested in building the units on the nearside rather than the offside, as they were geared up to do.

Finally, SC Conversions in Plymouth appeared on the radar and said they could do it. After a number of visits to their workshop – which handily turned out to be just a few miles from where he works - Chris was confident that they could do what he wanted, which basically was totally bespoke, he sent his van to them for the work to be done. The brief was that the van should not look too ‘standard’, but not look too different either. Chris wanted the units to be dark to go with the theme of the bus, but he didn’t want ‘gloomy’. So, he selected the ‘Hacienda Black’ finish, which is dark and smart, but not sombre. Remember that comment way back at the top of this feature, about a fridge? Well this is where all becomes clear! Chris had decided



CRX80



Chris had decided that the standard CRX50 fridge didn't suit his needs, so the entire interior build had to be based around the bigger CRX80

that the standard CRX50 fridge didn't suit his needs. So, the entire interior build had to be based around the bigger CRX80. This meant some careful planning in order to fit the RIB bed (with the memory foam and leather options ticked for extra comfort when sleeping). It also meant that the Dometic 9222 hob/sink installation had to be a left-hand sink in order for there to be sufficient space for the bigger fridge. Bespoke and handmade

drawers and cupboards, with lots of sockets, finally resulted in Chris' perfect interior. Selecting 12v cigar style sockets instead of USBs - "as the technology continues to improve and adapters keep you up to speed rather than a 1-watt socket for ever" says Chris. The job took a lot longer than anticipated and Rob from SC Conversions - referred to as "a wizard" by Chris - was pretty glad to see it finished! If you have a right-hand slider van, and need

some conversion work on it, expect the job to take longer and cost more than you think, says Chris! Despite the time of the build, both men were very happy with the results.

Although this re-telling implies a van bought and steadily converted with the results you see in the pictures. This isn't in fact the case. Or at least, it was not a 'straight line' conversion. There were some detours along the way. According to Chris he has had every variant of layout possible and has spent the equivalent of the GDP of a small African country on it! The van has spent time with an Exploria bed, a full width RIB set up as a day van and has had kitchen pods, before finally arriving at its current configuration. It is definitely a van that has evolved.

Despite the lengthy list of work done, Chris states one of the best





After countless calls to conversion companies, it seemed none of them were interested in building the units on the nearside rather than the offside they were geared up to do

things he has done to his bus is putting a favourite picture of a favourite place on the underneath of the roof bed base, so he can see it often when the roof is up. The photo was taken years ago on Gwithian beach. The colour version was a bit too 'in your face' for a large image in a small space, so the photo has been changed to monochrome and now looks great in the van. His best experiences are the journeys and adventures he can go on with it, especially the trips to France and Austria which Chris describes as "genuinely outstanding". On the rather less enjoyable end of the spectrum was a drive home

after a very wet weekend away, when a not properly closed zip resulted in water coming through from the drenched roof canvas and dripping onto his lap!

Chris says that he has just 'a couple more bits to do then I'm done! Honest!' (Isn't that what practically everyone with a VW van of any description says?) Those couple more bits include an audio upgrade in the form of an Alpine Halo 9, where it will complement the smart Mk6 Golf flat bottom steering wheel, and the reupholstery of the front seats to match the back. Dare I also mention (whisper it) 'wheels'... 🚗



Chris

And I'd like to thank:

The team at Slidepods - www.slidepods.co.uk
Simon and Rob at SC Conversions for a cracking job - www.scconversions.co.uk

T5



VanQuest

It's a family affair down at VanQuest in Devon - whether you're hiring a camper, or having one converted to your exact requirements 📞 Simon Cooke

“**W**hen I was nineteen, I was buying and selling cars when I bought a Splitty from a guy at work. I didn't know anything about campers at the time, it was a 1965 Canterbury Pitt conversion and it cost me £325,” said Phil Andrews. And that's where it all started from, he used it as his daily driver and also for weekends away, he kept it for twenty years. “It was so practical that I couldn't believe why everyone didn't have one,” he remembers. During that time, he also started restoring Bays.

Fast forward a lot, to when his son, Kelly, a trained mechanic, was away on his four-month Honeymoon. Obviously, there was no way he was going to have grown up liking anything other than VWs - there was no danger his first car would be a Nova - it was in fact a Beetle, which you might have guessed.

That Honeymoon trip included hiring a camper in Australia and Kelly reckoned that he could do a better job converting them than the one he hired. Once home, he and his dad set up VanQuest, this was in 2011. It was in truth, something they had discussed a few times before. “I'd always wanted to build my own campers, because I'd worked on so many of them, I could see some conversions worked, and others didn't,” said Phil. He popped down to his local auction and bought their first van. “We also have a few holiday homes down in Devon, so I could see the potential for hiring campers,” he continued. Amy - Kerry's wife - now helps out in the office and takes control of the hire side of the business - she has six vans to deal with, including a T6 and an auto, which is very popular.

Their first build was a full

U-shaped kitchen







The average annual mileage for our hire vans is about 6000, we keep them on the fleet for about three years

camper conversion which went well, so their hire fleet began. Phil remembers buying a book about converting VWs, but all it gave them was a laugh, rather than any useful information. "Our first two vans ended up with the same colour interior, because we made a mistake with the wood we ordered for the first one; we thought we were getting a good deal!" admits Phil. Obviously those first one were made-to-measure and although they now have templates to work from, they still do everything by hand, which means they can make each one slightly different. Check out the U-shaped kitchen on their T5 (featured in the last issue and pictured over), this layout means somebody can be cooking in the

kitchen while somebody else is still in bed; and what a view while you do the washing up - it might even tempt me to help out in the kitchen.

Having successfully built several hire vans and established a good reputation along the way, people started asking VanQuest to work on their own vans. They also discovered that a lot of people hire a van as an experiment, realise they love the experience, then want one of their own. In fact, one of the early vans was sold to a customer who loved it so much when they hired it, that they had to buy it - so they must be doing something right.

A bit more about the hire side of the business? Rates start from £275 for a weekend in the winter and that pretty much includes all





A family affair



the essentials. But you can add things such as bike racks or toilets for a bit extra. Having a fleet of hire vans means they get a lot of customer feedback about what works or does not work with their vans, which they can incorporate into later builds. I was surprised to learn that not all the vans stay local, some travel to Scotland or even Europe when they are on hire. "One year we had four hire vans booked for Glastonbury; it was one of the wet years, and all of them had to be towed in and out of the site," recounts Phil with a grin. Amazingly even after a week in the mud, the vans came home in pretty good condition. "The average annual mileage for our hire vans is about 6000, we keep them on the fleet for about three years," explained Kerry. The worse thing a client has ever done with a hire van? Filled the water tank with diesel... Obviously hire vans tend to be rather seasonal, so it's just as well they have another side to the company. "I'd say our business is now about 50/50 between hire vans

One year we had four hire vans booked for Glastonbury; it was one of the wet years, and all of them had to be towed in and out of the site

and customer vans," said Phil.

The conversion side of VanQuest will be happy to source you a project van and then carry out a full hand-made conversion, or maybe just put windows in it - whatever the customer needs. Scot Seat supply all their M1 tested R&R beds - they appreciate the storage their beds offer, they fit Austops roofs, Dometic kitchens, and then use assorted brands for other items such as TVs or solar panels. They don't get involved in any bodywork, but live next door to a spray booth, which can be used if required and although Kerry offers servicing for customers, he doesn't want to get too involved in

any engine tuning or anything mechanical - despite his training. There are currently no plans for a massive expansion programme - they are keen to keep things in the family (Phil's wife - May - sews the curtains etc). Although it will be a long time before Kerry and Amy's kids will be much use with a jig saw; the youngest doesn't even go to school yet! 🚫

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Sharp Dressed Van

Q: What's big, bright yellow and rare?

A: Dean Sharp's Crafter

 Simon Cooke







This Crafter Is Dean Sharp's first ever VW - before this he'd been more of your Transit and Sprinter kinda guy, for both business and for transporting his motorbikes across Wales. At the time of writing he'd also recently returned from his first ever VW show - Dubs At The Castle - and his first attempt at Show & Shine. How did it go? "I got fantastic feedback from all the people who came and looked at my Crafter; we probably had a dozen people who currently owned a T5

and were looking for something bigger," Dean replied. "You'd be surprised how many people didn't know about the built-in blinds you could get as an option on the Crafter," he pointed out. They are very flash and in 2014 that option would have set you back almost £1000, so you can see why many people never ticked that box. They are very clever and it's just one less thing to forget when you are packing. With all the interest being shown in his van he would not be surprised that it won't be long before Crafters get their own

“Although they are 20s, I think the design of them actually makes them look smaller”

Bus Details

What did the van start as? Crafter Panel Van

Colour? Broom Yellow

SWB/LWB? LWB

BHP? 135

Wheel type and size? Spath Sp36 20"

Tyres? 265/45 x 20

Lowered? Standard suspension with air bags on rear

Why is it special to you? Because it's amazing! the colour, the graphics, the practicality and the fact that it's the only yellow one in existence!





I tracked down Holab Concepts who carried out the conversion and they told me they had only ever done four of these conversions

Show & Shine class at shows; usually they are stuck in with T6s or maybe in 'Other water-cooled'.

But we are getting a little ahead of ourselves. A few years ago, Dean was in the market for a new van to replace his then current Sprinter which kept going into limp mode, nobody was able to cure the problem. "I had no intention of buying a Crafter at the time, because everybody had told me that the Sprinter was a better engine," remembers Dean with a grin. Somewhat ironic considering why he was looking for a replacement in the first place. "Then I came across this Crafter on eBay when I typed in racevan and I just had to buy it; to be honest they weren't even

good photos for the advert, but the colour and roof just did it for me," he remembers. The van had only clocked up 1500 miles since its last MOT, as the owner only used it for transporting his motorbikes and he didn't have much spare time to do that anymore.

"I absolutely loved it when I saw it in the flesh," said Dean. "OK, the bodywork wasn't mint, but it didn't say that it was in the advert. I had to fit two new leisure batteries and a starter motor, which I wasn't expecting." But aside from that it was all good. "He told me there were only six ever made with this roof conversion, so I thought I had something a bit





Very cool on board toolbox graphic

I absolutely loved it when I saw it in the flesh

special,” he continued. It turned out to be ever rarer than he’d been told. “I tracked down Holab Concepts who carried out the conversion and they told me they had only ever done four of these conversions; two Sprinters and two Crafters. Apparently there was a lot of work involved with the strengthening needed for the roof conversion and back in 2014 there just wasn’t the demand for them,” said Dean. He also discovered that the first owner of the van had

been a motorbike dealer, who sold it to a motocross rider, who had the garage and roof, bodykit and interior conversion carried out by Holab.

Since buying the Crafter it’s had a lot of use by Dean, both for his motocross, mountain biking and general camping needs. Including a two month, 5000-mile trip down to Spain for skiing and biking. That European adventure was a mixture of wild and campsite camping - he’s got a solar panel



View to the higher top

Everything you need in the garage





I had no intention of buying a Crafter at the time

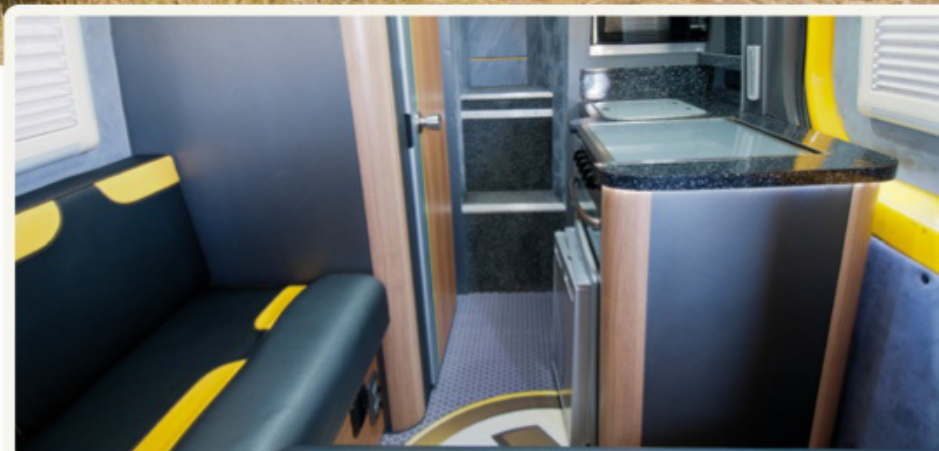
for off-grid needs and huge water tanks for the shower. In fact, he says the only reason they ventured into campsites was when he wife need to use her hair straighteners!

So, what changes had Dean made? Well, for a start, he's had a fresh coat of paint added - VW Broom yellow again - the colour was one of the main reasons he bought it in the first place, he then added some racy graphics. On the outside he's also added side bars, an electric step, replaced the missing external toolbox and added a BBQ point. Inside he's added extra lighting and sockets to the already luxurious interior, which came with a shower, toilet, double bed, kitchen etc etc.

There have also been some improvements under the bonnet with the power raised from 109 bhp to a safe and reliable 135 bhp. He doesn't want to go much higher than that, as

he's been informed that turbos can start to be a weak link on these engines when you cross the 160 bhp threshold.

He's also had new flooring fitted in the garage which is a one-off custom-made vinyl. He's added air suspension to the rear to compensate for the weight of his motorbikes. "It sat a bit low at the back and was catching the tow bar on the ground," he said to justify that modification. He's fitted new 20" alloys. But then goes on to say, "there's only one thing that I don't think is quite right with the van, and that's the wheels; apart from that I would not change a thing". "Although they are 20s, I think the design of them actually makes them look smaller," he complained. So, he's on the hunt for some chunky 22s which look like 22s. By the time this feature is published he'll probably already be riding on his new rims. 🚗



Dean

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Camper Caramel Apple Bites

by Steve "autoholic" Edwards

In November only the hardest of campers will be out in their vans so here's some delicious treats to take with you and warm you up

If you have the facilities to get use out of your van all year round, then why would you not go and enjoy the darkest nights to see as many stars as you can? If you take these Camper Caramel Apple Bites with you, then they will warm you from the inside with the inclusion of the spices in addition to the ginger biscuit base. While you're mixing it's really helpful to use silicone utensils as they are completely non-stick, which is very desirable especially where butter and biscuit crumb are concerned. When it comes the apples, if you don't have a corer, then you'll have to do it the old-fashioned way, with a sharp knife, but take care and mind your fingers. Also when it comes to the caramel sauce, make sure the sugar has been dissolved in half the water before you heat it, then take special care when adding the remaining water as it will spit, because sugar when heated is hotter than boiling water.

Ingredients

300g Ginger biscuits
150g Butter, melted
4 Granny Smith's apples
100g Dark muscovado sugar
30g Plain flour
½ tsp Ground cinnamon
¼ tsp Ground nutmeg

Caramel Topping

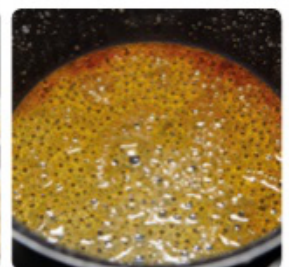
100g Caster sugar
100ml Water

Method:

1. Pre-heat oven to 180C, 350F or Gas Mark 4.
2. In a food processor or large bowl break up the biscuits until you have a fine crumb.
3. Melt the butter over a gentle heat, add to the biscuit crumb and mix thoroughly.
4. Line a muffin tray with cupcake paper cases and equally divide the mixture between them, push the

Top Tips

Take special care with the caramel sauce as it does get incredibly hot, we recommend a high-quality non-stick pan and a silicone spatula. As always remember to clean as you go, nobody likes a messy kitchen!



mixture down with the back of a spoon.

5. Bake for five minutes then remove from the oven and allow to cool.
6. Peel and core the apples then finely chop them
7. In a bowl or saucepan, add the chopped apple, cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar and flour. Mix thoroughly until fully combined.
8. Equally divide the apple mixture into the cupcake cases on top of the biscuits and bake for fifteen minutes.
9. Allow to fully cool then remove the paper cases.
10. Place the caster sugar and half the water in a non-stick pan and simmer over a low heat until

the sugar dissolves.

11. Once dissolved turn the heat up, do not stir at this point, allow the sugar to go a golden-brown colour.
12. Once that has been reached pour in the remaining water, I found pouring over the back of my spatula decreased the spitting, stir until all the water has been combined.
13. Spoon the caramel over the apple mixture and again allow to cool completely, pop in the fridge if you can't wait, but make sure to use a plate to catch any drips.
14. Serve and enjoy. 🍷

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Three Bs And Some Other Letters

Words: **Alan Hayward**

Show wise it's mainly been about Bs for me recently, with Busfest and Brighton Breeze taking centre stage

Sadly for alliteration fans, sandwiched between the two was Grill 'N' Chill, referring to the show as Brill 'N' Bill however, just doesn't cut the mustard.

So Busfest first then. Some new ideas were introduced this year, among them some new food and drink traders, breaking the inhouse monopoly that has been on offer in the past. Judging by the queues these seemed to be very well received. The trade area is what the show is all about for many and as usual it was well supported. Although there were some gaps where traders presumably had paid for their pitches and then not turned up. This always seems to be an odd way to run a business and as Busfest traditionally label the pitches, it is quite easy to know the names of the guilty few, if you're that way inclined. One of the criticisms laid at the organiser's door is that the trade area is the same every year, but with many traders insisting on the same pitch year in year out, I guess their hands are tied. Whatever, I like the show, always have. It's a great place to meet up, often for the last time with everybody that is anybody in the scene. The camping grounds usually offer a wealth of future magazine features.

The show & shine this year, as it does most, lets you see the



The start of the line up

majority of the season's big vans, most of which we have hopefully featured or have the images ready for a forthcoming spread. Of course, sometimes you see one that you've missed, one that has washed up in a competitor's magazine. Not so this year, we've had the pick of the crop. I'll be back next year, I love this show.

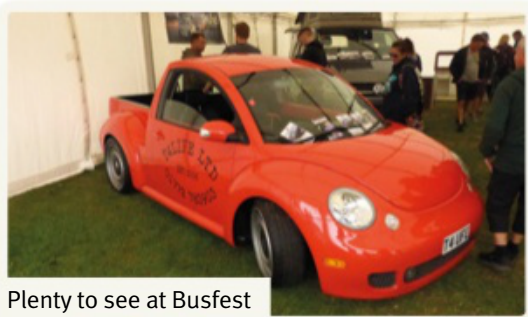
Brill 'N' Bill, oh all right Grill 'N' Chill, is another favourite. Sadly, magazine deadlines meant that it was a one day visit only for me this year. This was a shame, as last year it was one day only show and I was looking forward to camping at the Hop Farm once again. Whatever, the camping fields were rammed, and the show and shine was oversubscribed with the usual eccentric mix of VW and non-VWs alike. I was able to snag a couple of features and a new freelancer too. Winner winner chicken dinner! A lover of all things quirky, my favourite show & shine participant was a cool patinaed AmphiCat, which caused some of my friends (of a certain age) to break into song every time they saw it; the theme tune from the Banana Splits TV series being their ballad of choice (ask your parents kids).

Brighton Breeze this year was something of a conundrum. There's no way to beat around this particular Sussex based bush. Madeira Drive

was not its normal chock-a-block self. Don't get me wrong we're not talking tumbleweed; it just wasn't packed. Asking around may have given me a false perception, but it seems that some of the air-cooled boys don't like the amount of water pumpers now seen on the sea front and have kept away. Ironically some of the water pumpers became grumpy with being treated (in their eyes) as second class citizens and now also keep away. The net effect is that there were spaces on the front this year, a hitherto unheard of phenomena. My personal feeling is that, whilst there may be something in the above, it probably has more to do with vans not being able to just turn up early doors and take a central position on the strip. This quite rightly is saved for those assembling at Hook Road Arena in Epsom and cruising down, as was originally envisaged all those years ago. Whatever, personally I'd like to see more vans of all types next year and the show returning to its more normal brim-full Brighton (more Bs is always good). People with no interest in football should look away now... Of course, the mighty Seagulls were busy thrashing Tottenham just up the road at the Amex on that day, so maybe that's where the missing vans went. Again though, like Arnie, "I'll be back". 🚫

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Plenty to see at Busfest



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Time for a change?

Words: **David Eccles**

Having had a T6 Ocean on loan for five weeks now, how am I finding it?



With our California away at the bodyshop for a second round of roof corrosion repairs, VW have kindly lent us a 19 plate T6 DSG Ocean (the full on camper conversion with autobox). It has taken us on photoshoots, to shows, touring round Norfolk as well as family days out and we have racked up some serious mileage already! So, is it better than our T5.1 California? Yes, and no!



There's no doubt it's quieter, smoother and more economical; though comparing driving a DSG model with a manual version is not really fair. It drives itself almost, shifting quickly and efficiently through the gears and it really has some oomph when you need it, especially on motorways or hills. Having the latest Euro 6 engine it's also cleaner, something that will become increasingly important as emission zones come into force in towns and cities. Fuel economy was also a nice surprise, 43 mpg on the run to Brighton Breeze recently! There's lots of driver safety features I have not used, nor have I used the Sat Nav and blue-tooth connectivity properly, but to many, they would be definite plus points.

Interior wise it's also about tweaking rather than changing – most stuff is essentially the same. I liked the split glass lid for the sink and hob (would recommend this if having a conversion done), and the opening front section of the roof canvas. The new LED lighting in the roof, cupboards and round the kitchen unit are also a good improvement. Ours came with two very good options – a fold out Deluxe mattress topper for the rear seat / bed and an electric

pump shower attachment at the rear. This latter I actually found really useful – washing hair no longer meant wet floor and was very useful for cleaning muddy boots after a walk in the woods. If you have a dog then this would be a real godsend and if you are having a bus converted (or deciding on options for a Cali) this is definitely something else I would recommend.

Not everything was better for us however. The pull out front blinds are flimsy and useless – much better to use an external screen / cab window wrap. Though the inclusion of a discreet bottle holder was a great place to keep a bottle of wine cool, I prefer the storage / layout of the T5 dash, but that's just a personal thing as the T6 one certainly looks smarter. One thing I really do not like is the standard fabric upholstery, it feels hard and course and is not very inspiring to look at, I'm so glad we opted for having Alcantara / leather our T5. But a set of seat covers would transform it.

It now transpires that our T5's roof corrosion repairs will require a full repaint of the whole roof, so I guess I will just have to put up with the luxury of DSG T6 for a bit longer! 🚫



David Eccles is editor of **VW Camper & Commercial**, which covers the whole VW bus scene. He owned the same 1966 Devon camper for 34 years, before migrating to a new T5 California. You can contact David on editor@volkswagen-camper.co.uk.



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